

6-6

Men Who Enjoy Being Women

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ING A BALL
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HE BALL"

Become
Your
Woman
Inside!

Illusions

Hot TVITS's. Free Personals!

Pride Centre of Edmonton
9540 - 111 Avenue
Edmonton AB T5G 0A5

Dear Reader.....

You wouldn't know it by the weather we've been having but summer is almost upon us! As summer approaches we start the campaign trail for our next Illusions Empress, then the "Girls of Summer" revue, an ARGRA Rodeo and various other events including the "PRIDE" Parade. We have always prided ourselves in our ability to bridge the gap between various sectors of our communities that we live in. Our continued involvement in all facets of everyday life is essential for us to grow as a group and for us to grow as individuals. Over this summer when you may not spend as much time in your transgendered part of your life remember that we all have to maintain a reasonable amount of pressure on the general populace to at the very least retain the freedoms we enjoy right now. If you hear someone saying disparaging remarks about anything you know is incorrect don't just sit there and let it pass! You can say what you know is true without compromising yourself if that is a concern for you. If you let blatant misinformation live it just gets passed on and usually in an even more exaggerated manner. If no one says anything and assumes someone else will set the record straight, well..... you just might wake up one morning and find "Through No Fault of Your Own" you have NO RIGHTS just like those people who were talked about while you sat by and were afraid to speak the truth! You don't have to be "Gay" to be concerned about "Basic Human Rights", you just have to be deemed as "DIFFERENT" and you will become part of problem for those people out there looking for a "SOLUTION"!

In Posies and Pin Curls:

Love.... Barbie & Christine



Illusions Calendar

CALGARY

May 18 Dignitary Night
May 30 Taking A Breather to Socialize
June 14 Pre-Birthday Bash @ Midnite Cafe
June 15 "ILLUSIONS 6th BIRTHDAY"
June 27 Regular Social
July 13 Stampede BBQ ????
July 25 Regular Social
August 31 "Girls of Summer"

EDMONTON

May 9 Wardrobe Co-ordination
May 18 Regular Social
June 13 Psychologist
June 22 BBQ @ TBA
July 11 Community Awareness
July 20 Beach Party & Bingo

For Illusions Edmonton information call either 486-9661 or 488-3234 leave a message for Roxanne or Rachel

RED DEER

Socials: Every Last Saturday of the Month at "The Other Place Bar" The address is Bay 3 & 5579-47 St. Red Deer Alberta. Call (403) 342 6440 for details.

REMEMBER:

Attendance to Illusions Calgary and Edmonton functions require that you be a member or invited guest, of either Illusions or an Illusions member. For location information, or other details about who we are call:

(403) 236-7072 Calgary
(403) 486-9661 Edmonton

**EDITORS: BARBIE,
CHRISTINE AND LISA**

Lingerie Fashion Show -

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A Night of Visual Overload!

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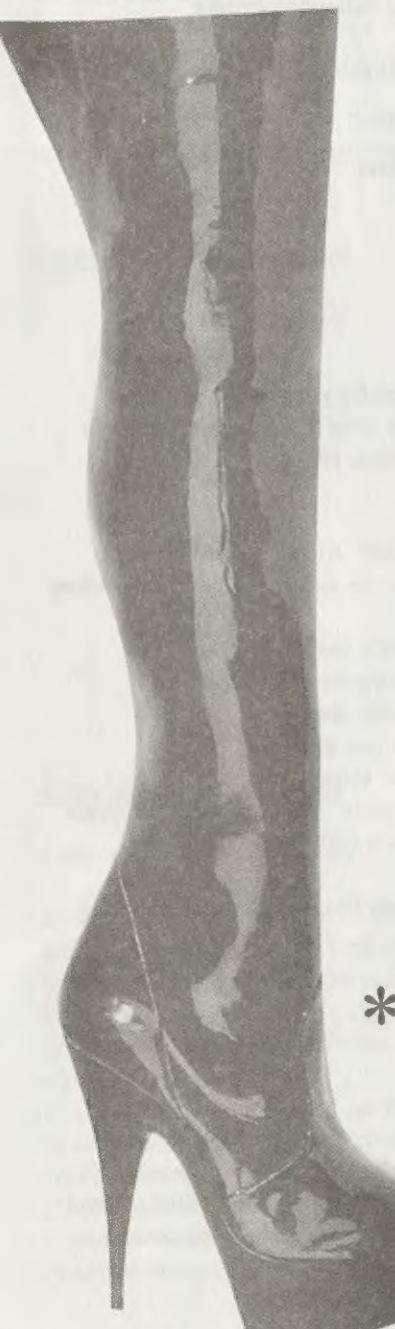
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STYLE NOTES FROM THE INTERNET: Cruising the cyber-boulevards not too long ago, we stumbled upon a bulletin board for the sartorially obsessed called "alt.fashion." There we found this response to a question someone had posted about what shoes one should wear with what skirt: "I am partial to shorter skirt lengths. Since I like to show off, I usually wear a skirt with thigh-top stockings and high-heel shoes. My standard is a black-patent, closed-toe shoe with ankle strap and five-inch heel (Frederick's of Hollywood No. 69914). I realize that this is not for everyone, nor is it really good in a casual situation." The note was signed "David."



Candidates for Illusions Empress

Candidates are listed in no particular order, nor does this order indicate any preference to any candidate by the editorial staff of this magazine!

Candidate..... Rachel

HOT GOSSIP, JUST OFF THE WIRES

All my sources have heard the rumour that Rachel, the authoress of "The Girls Up North" articles is, brace yourselves, in the running for Empress this year. Will wonders never cease? Is the world coming to an end? What's even more bizarre, is her platform. Early reports say that it's based on the following points:

- Vote for her because she won't be around all the time in Calgary.
- Vote for her because she'll get the scoop on all the gossip about our Royalty. (I just hope she realizes that ours are not like the British royals!)
- Vote for her because she just wants to have fun.

Apparently more planks in the platform will be released as the election draws closer. There you have it girls. Hard to imagine, huh? Just remember, you heard it hear first!

Candidate..... Christine

Dear Illusions Girls,

Once again this year I will be competing to become your Empress. To help you make your decision I have created a "Pink Book" containing all my campaign promises. If I am chosen to be your Empress I promise to keep all my promises. If I fail to carry out any of these promises I promise to resign, and that's a promise I promise to keep even if I break my other promises!

Here is a list of the promises contained in my "Pink Book".

1. At last year's party I knocked 'em dead, with my rendition of "Something in Red". At Girls of Summer I entertained you once again, with "Two Sparrows in a Hurricane". I promise to put on another super show, when once again this year to the stage I go.
2. When off to Illusions parties I goes, I'll wear beautiful dresses and other women's clothes.
3. When dressed as a woman I'll go all the way, under my dresses I'll wear sexy lingerie.
4. I'll shave my legs at least twice a year, to keep them nice and smooth for you my dear.
5. I'll keep Illusions a fun place you know, by having theme parties to which you can go.
6. I'll plan a "Girls Night Out" for a change of pace, we'll go to a movie or dinner some place.
7. Empress Teri's reign will be hard to beat, she did the job so thorough and complete. But I promise, Empress Teri I will "top", no easy task since she is so darn tall. I can't tell you how I'll do it right now, but at the Birthday Party I'll reveal it to all.

In closing the main reason for Empress I decided to run, is to dress up and perform because it's great fun! So come one come all, vote for Empress and have a ball.

Sincerely..... "Lady in Waiting", Christine (Your Poetically Correct Candidate)

Candidate..... Roxanne

Edmonton Needs Royalty- Getting Illusions out of the Closet

Hi, I'm Roxanne and I'm running for royalty. Many of you know me as the outspoken, little bitchy brunette from Edmonton but I assure you I am a bit more than that! The reason I'm running is that I think Illusions and its members would benefit by being more out both in the gay and straight communities. I have experienced Candidates..... (cont'd next page)

Candidates..... (cont'd)

considerable personal growth since I joined Illusions and many gay groups in the city, but I really started to grow when Roxanne got out into straight society and started living a normal life as a transgendered person. I regularly take other "girls" to society events such as the symphony, dine in straight restaurants and go shopping as Roxanne. I believe I can transfer what I have learned by taking these "Risks" to help others more easily forge their own paths of personal growth and also to help the club as a whole take a more active role in society. I am very comfortable being out as Roxanne and feel I can well represent the club in any societal or political events that may be necessary to enhance our image as transgendered persons.

I intend to build on the efforts that Empress Teri and Princess' Michelle and Jacqui have shown as they forged some alliances between Illusions in Calgary and the alternate lifestyle community. Diversity is strength and we need these people on our side. I have already been doing this in Edmonton. In addition to being on the Edmonton Illusions committee, I am a member of a number of organisations including the Court, P-Flag, and the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton. On that latter group I am peer councillor, guiding people through gay and transgendered issues, and have also been elected as the Social Services Director. I represent Illusions at Outreach at the U. of A., have given talks on transgendered issues, and even done a radio interview. I'm out there!

I lead by example. I ask no more of anyone than what I would be willing to do myself. If I can make it and have a good life as a transgendered person, so can you. Let me help you accomplish that goal.

Roxy

Candidate..... Krystal

KRYSTAL STEELE

FOR

ILLUSIONS EMPRESS VI

DEDICATED
HONEST
OPEN MINDED
HARD WORKING
FUN!

THE CHOICE IS "KRYSTAL" CLEAR!

Candidate..... Karen

Lady's and gentle persons;

In running for the position of Empress I feel I could have a very visible presence. It would be my aim to establish a greater visibility in the both the communities we could be involved in. We needn't go from our closet at home to a bigger closet called the club. There is a whole world out there that is full of experiences one could savour. We need to be able to do things for ourselves; not necessarily because the gay community does them. By the same token we also need to maintain our strong ties to the various groups in the alternate community of which we are a part of.

I would like to see us produce better quality entertainment productions in terms of their organization and possibly have as many as four productions per year.

As I am around the store on a regular basis I find my presence helpful for members both current & prospective. This gives me an opportunity to greet all of you that come to the store.

Consider Karen for your sixth Empress.

(Candidates..... (cont'd next page)

Candidates..... (cont'd)

Candidate..... Michelle

OH HEY, AND BY THE WAY!..... MICHELLE IS RUNNING FOR EMPRESS!

Yes, after giving it much thought, I have decided to take another run at becoming your Illusions Empress VI! Why did I need to think about it? Mainly because the Empress position has evolved into one of club leadership and anyone who tries to fill the heels of the two previous Empress' will have to be in a position to and want to accept a very heavy work load! I took some time to reflect on the requirements of the coming year and decide whether or not I would be able to carry the load. I have decided that I can and so I am running. I think that my activities this past year as 1 st. Princess have prepared me and shown both my abilities as a person and my commitments to the club, its activities and the membership at large. I have also gained experience that I didn't have before and that experience would help me be an effective Empress.

I am a person that likes to achieve goals (whether they be mine or those of others) through consensus. I often look to others for confirmation of ideas and I am not afraid to be vulnerable in discussion and admit my mistakes when I am wrong! I can be a strong leader when the situation requires it and I am a person who is willing to make decisions when required! When responsible for something, I like to have all the bases covered and yet as a person, I am not afraid to delegate responsibilities to the people around me. Teri was so right when she said, that there are no rules to follow when you are Empress and yet we both know there is the evolving philosophy of our clubs history and it is one that grows stronger each year! As your new Empress VI, if elected to that position, I would pick up the threads of those I follow! If I were elected, what you would see, would be a bit of Empress I "Stephanie", Empress II "Jacqui Samms", Empress III "Wendy", Empress IV "Lisa", Empress V "Teri", and then a little bit of me mixed in as well! My reign would be one of stewardship and yet as an individual I would try to expand upon their idea's in my own way. Leave my own signature so to speak and yet my efforts would still be in respect of the ones I would be following. I have an agenda, as a human being it would be hard not to! My agenda is one that is in support of the concept of acceptance, comfort and of inclusion for people who crossdress, which I believe is the philosophy of our club. In that regard, one project I would like to sponsor this coming year would be to improve how we welcome new members to the club and develop some kind of basic information package that answers some of their questions and helps them get involved.

During this past year I have had the chance to meet and make friends with so many other people who are part of the alternative community that surrounds us. As Empress VI, I think I would have a good chance to continue our efforts to expand our club in that direction. Although I was not there at it's beginning, I respect the origins of our club and the values of the personalities that made it happen! It would be in their spirit that I carry on. My only campaign promise is this: I will strive to maintain the concept of the Illusions Social Club philosophy, which is one of inclusion, acceptance and the offering of comfort to all that crossdress. I will do my best to help expand our horizons. What more can I say!

Love and Best Wishes..... Michele Hart

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Letter from the Editor

Blah, Blah, Blah



Maybe I have been working in retail for too many years...but lately I have been very frustrated in the shop. There have been several customers that I feel have needed a kick in the butt. The first scenario that comes to mind...and this happens a lot..is the one where the GUY comes in and wants to buy something. He hums and haws...makes no attempt at conversation at first...then asks, "Where do the girls hang out?". We know what kind of girls he's referring to...as he's clutching pantyhose himself! Well we suggest a bar downtown and he becomes more insistent about when, who and where? Well, sorry pal, but we're not a dating service ready for your every whim. Usually this type of customer gets very irritable about the lack of my complete attention. As they keep the conversation going..I realize that the type of person that I am dealing with here..has spent many hours alone buried in the land of pornography figuring that true life must be a reflection of what they visualize in movies or mags. SORRY PAL! Let me tell you...I don't know of ONE real woman that would just roll over and say SURE...just cuz you have a hard on...and I can think of even less "almost or wannabe GALS" that would say "yes" as well. "No chance!! Wreck two hours worth of make up artistry on some horny stud who thinks he's the ultimate sexual experience." Not too likely Tim! You may be God's gift to yourself, but not to women, or mankind either for that matter. Come on... this is the real world..you need to either PAY for it..if you want it quick. (which always provokes a reply of .."Oh I can't afford it.") In which case I always reply back..if you want to play you have to pay.....OR.. you

have to build up relationships. But then we also have to consider here..that we're dealing with men. Testosterone mixed with huge amounts of ignorance. Yes...some men are pigs.

Speaking of men...I've also noticed a characteristic that women would handle differently....Some "Coming Out" new members etc.... spend hours in the shop also humming and hawwing..and sweating..while they cross over from their closets to our store....hopefully on their way to becoming friends and more socially acceptable people with their hobby. When they finally get their courage up to tell me and chat...they also seem insistent that I have 110% of my hearing attention aimed at them...and that I give them back the complete attention that they feel they need or deserve. Sometimes their "coming out" isn't the best timing for my life...maybe I have my period..maybe my kids just came back from their grandfather's funeral and we're all dealing with our own feelings...(this actually happened recently)...so to sum it up..lots of real life is happening in others' lives. One customer in particular..keeps humming and hawwing..and said aloud that he felt like he's not feeling WELCOME! EXCUSE ME! Maybe your "coming out" process isn't the traffic stopping earth-shattering affair that you think it is.

Now had that been a real woman..the entire coming out process would have been different...It would be like a woman to come in, and, even with the same nervousness...express her thoughts and feelings ..ask nicely for some guidance and ASK for some help...followed with lots of PLEASE and THANK YOU's. As womans'

libbers consider that to be part of maybe the second class citizen..it's also a fine quality of a PERSON. The bottom line is....anyone can put on a dress.....it is how your attitude comes through in or out of the dress that is what's important. How can you purport to feeling feminine if your male attitude still reigns within? Not to encourage anyone to be a second class citizen..but an honest almost subservient type attitude can take you a long way when you are dealing with others in what ever capacity.

On to other subjects....Illusion's 6th Birthday is almost here and that will be an interesting and fun evening for all.(Gads...has it been 6 years already!)

If you haven't been into the shop lately...come on in and check out the new facelift we have given the place. The space that's new to us in the basement..will really help us out for putting the magazine together. Don't forget girls, to send us your stories and articles. We are always very grateful for magazine input.

We've been putting together some plans for the next Bizarre Ball and maybe the date will be October 26...being a couple of days before Halloween should make for a good turnout. Just think...people dressing up as their alter egos.

We'll keep you posted!

Lots of love

Barbie



Man/Woman

'Felt like an outcast,' transsexual says
Transsexual tries to fit into society

These are headlines which face people who don't fit society's norms and is no more or less than you can expect when you, your workplace or an acquaintance "Outs" you. Sometimes you'll get a sympathetic reporter, most times though you can expect some one in the media chain to sensationalize your situation because they are in the business to sell news!

Our new member Dawna sent a letter in to the Toronto Star speaking about societies advancements except in areas where some personal understanding is concerned. Dawna goes on to say that she doesn't flaunt the fact she's a transsexual but she worries about the harassment and potential violence from people who threatened by something that is different to them.

Dawna goes on to say that everyone has something that makes them different and those that ridicule others, particularly about sexual issues, are the most insecure about themselves and likely covering up their own insecurities. She goes on to say that people who are secure in themselves usually can be compassionate and see more than just the negatives of life.

Staying confident is difficult when daily you have to worry about reactions from people on the street through to your own family. Each bit of negativity slows our progress towards our desire to live a normal life. People have no idea how many people have to live with this lodestone because most people's preference is to "Blend" into the scenery.

The letter was headed 'Transsexual tries to fit into society' and less than a month later an article was done by the Star complete with a picture of Dawna. The article was done by a female staff reporter who wrote the article in a very positive way and should be commended on her sensitivity towards an issue she may

have had no understanding about before writing this article. It's not surprising she wouldn't have experienced transsexualism as the "experts" feel this "condition" happens to about 1 in 50,000.

Although the "Toronto Star" handled the article admirably and didn't "out" Dawna to her employer, family or friends, which has happened to people through their contact with the media, unfortunately when she tried to quietly transition on the job and in her personal life the troubles started. Her letter indicating this is in our "Letters" section and states that she has to elicit the help of the "Human Rights Commission". We wish her luck with her personal quest to become a whole person.



"I told you that you shouldn't attempt urinating in the male stand-up position until your male genital construction was fully healed and your stitches removed! Now, who's gonna mop up that ceiling in the men's room?!!"

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EDMONTON'S UPCOMING EVENTS

May 9, Wardrobe Co-ordination

For this evenings social we will have someone from one of the fashion boutiques in the city come in and talk to us about how to build and co-ordinate our wardrobe. In other words, how to get the biggest bang for our buck.

May 18, Regular Social

Tonight we take a break and are having just a regular get together with nothing special planned.

June 13, Psychologist

We are planning on having one of the city's better known psychologists come in and talk to the members about crossgenderism and any related issues.

June 22, BBQ Night

On this evening, we will have a barbecue at the home of one of our members. Just remember to wear your picnic clothes for a fun evening. There is a sheltered patio in case the weather is less than ideal. (Ask Roxy or Rachel for more details).

July 11, Community Awareness

Tonight we will have someone from the police service come in and talk to us about how the police view crossdressers. Perhaps we can even educate the police about us during the evening. We will also have someone from GLCCE come in and talk to us about the organization and how we relate to it.

July 20, Beach Party & Bingo

Do any of you remember the Beach Blanket Bingo movies? Good for you! This is not what this night will be like. This is a night with an obvious summer theme, so dress for a day at the beach. There will also be bingo games and prizes for those who play.

August 8, Glamour Dressing

On this night we will have somebody come in and talk and perhaps even show us how we can dress for a more glamorous look.

August 20, Regular Social

The social committee decided it needed a break so it chose not to do anything special on this night.

September 1, ISCWR Ball

This is the annual ball of the Court in Edmonton. The girls of Illusions will once again go as a group to the ball here. Last year we had a blast and expect to do so again this year.

September 12, TBA

The social committee is still in discussion about what we should do on this night. Stay tuned for more details in future issues.

September 21, Scavenger Hunt

This could be the fun event of the year. The girls will be split up into small teams. Each team will have a list of items that they have to get during the evening. The first team back with all the items will be the winners.

New Friends at Illusions

#416 Hiedi. Hoping to find herself and accept life as it is.

#417 Roxy. New to us from southern B.C.

#418 Chance. Long time CD'er recently moved from the east.

#419 Rachel. A gal with widely diverse interest.

#420 Elly May. Long time closeted just coming out.

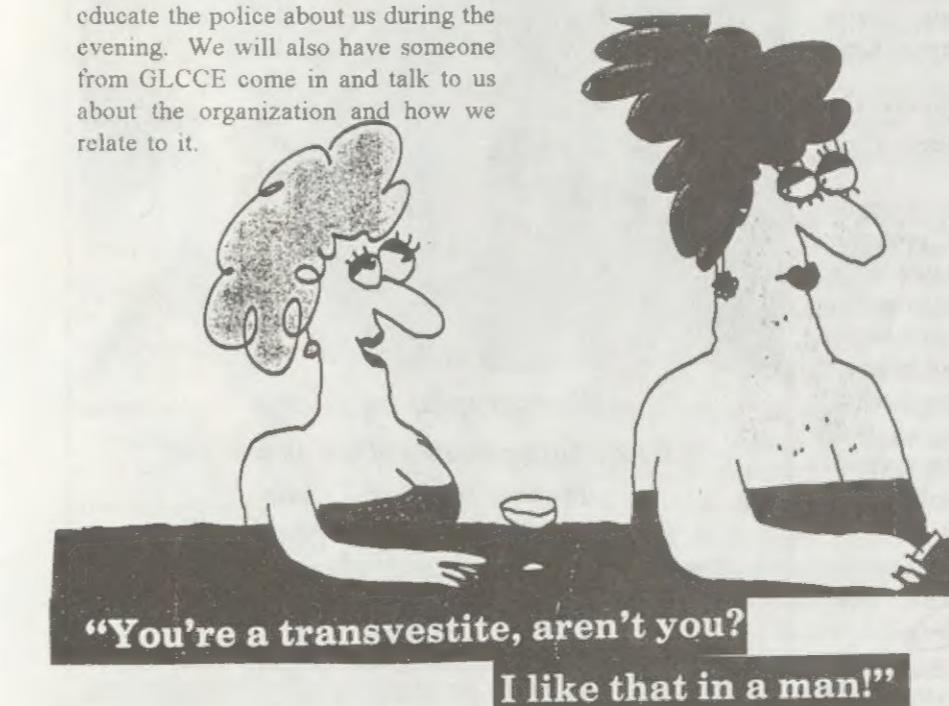
#421 Gabby. Hairdresser and a good time gal.

#422 Heather. A student.

#423 J.L. From south central B.C.

#424 Kerin. Another gal from the west coast.

#425 Rachelle. Glad to be out of the closet and meeting new people.



Thank-you

We have received a few donations over the past while (I won't name names for fear I'll miss one of you, but you know who you are) and the funds will be used towards our charity donation or for operational costs as requested by the donor. Some members put the 50/50 proceeds back to the charity fund and others send a little extra in with their membership fees. One of the members donated their "tips" from an evening of work at "The Other Place"! A heartfelt thank-you to all of you who have done that extra little bit that makes life a little less stressed for us!

EQUAL RIGHTS LEGISLATION

On April 26-27 Empress Teri represented Illusions at a conference held by the Just People Equal Rights Society at Red Deer College. Svend Robinson, Canada's first openly gay MP, spoke on the first evening, and Teri had a chance to speak to Mr. Robinson briefly about the Bill's impact on crossdressers, transsexuals and other transgendered persons. Despite a severe case of laryngitis that necessitated speaking in a conspiratorial whisper, she also "manned" (pardon the term) a booth to raise awareness of the club.

Teri followed this up with a letter faxed to Mr. Robinson's office and his reply is reproduced below. Teri's efforts obviously had an impact (?), as the Legislation (known as Bill C-33) passed third and final reading in the House of Commons on May 9. It now goes to the Senate. Teri has set up a meeting with a locally-based Senator who has been active on this issue.

It is important to remember that this legislation will only affect areas of federal jurisdiction, such as federally regulated industries (banks, airlines, etc.). Workers in areas of provincial jurisdiction (e.g. education) will still not have legislative protection. That fight is just beginning, and Illusions has joined the Coalition of Human Rights in Alberta to assist!

If you don't want to have to live in fear of losing your job or being evicted (or seeing a fellow member suffer this even if you're secure), you should consider striking while the iron is hot. With this issue being as controversial as it is, it will probably be a long time before anybody in Ottawa wants to touch it again.

If you would like to write to the Justice Minister, the Honourable Allan Rock, about his comments on this issue, his address is: House of Commons, Ottawa Ontario, K1A 0A6. Write your MLA and Premier Klein too!

Letter from Mr. Svend Robinson, MP, to Empress Teri:

Thank you for your recent letter and words of support. I certainly agree that "sexual orientation" protection should include transgendered people as I stated in Red Deer. Justice Minister Allan Rock was questioned on this issue at his press conference following introduction of the amendments and stated that he did not believe it was likely that the words would include transgendered people. When I was questioned by a media representative, I reaffirmed my view that they should. I will continue to advance this position during the course of debate on the bill.

Sincerely Yours,
Svend Robinson, MP



"We didn't do your sex change from male to female any too soon—you're seven and a half months pregnant!"

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ON THE NEWS FRONT

A paramedic in Washington, D.C. refused to treat a transgendered person after she had been hit by a car. He stood by and made derogatory remarks about her while she was on the ground in need of help.

Two other transgendered women were murdered in Massachusetts (at different times and by different people) by men who had picked them up.

In Colorado, a 20 year-old transgendered man is facing up to 32 years in prison for consensual sex that occurred when he and his partners were teenagers because he failed to disclose to them that he had a vagina.

Transgender activists and supporters in Boston are outraged and mobilizing in the wake of the brutal Nov. 19 murder of a transsexual there and the subsequent handling of the case by the media and the courts.

Their response to this horrendous crime seems to have been designed to fuel the notion that any action by a heterosexual man against a gay or transgendered person - including murder- is justified. In a page-one Nov. 22 story headlined "Preppy allegedly kills date in drag," the Boston Herald characterized the killer as a "polite and clean-cut" man who wore "khaki pants and sportcoats" to his job at a computer company. According to the Herald, this "clean-cut" guy strangled his victim in a rage after discovering her sexual identity.

The courts have freed the accused on \$50,000 bail. Even the D.A.'s office - no friend to the oppressed- had to object to that. Allowing bail in murder cases is also very unusual and seems conspicuous.

Opponents of oppression are seeing to it that the campaign to build sympathy for the killer will not be the last word. In the days since the crime, transgender activists and patrons of the establishment where the victim and the accused had allegedly met have come forward. They have stated that the accused had been to the bar repeatedly

compiled by our own cubette reporter... Gina

and knew the victim.

Despite all of this incriminating evidence, the accused's lawyer apparently plans to use a "gender panic" defense-claiming the killers action was an understandable result of his horror at discovering his date's sexual identity. Clearly, the entire defense strategy relies on appealing to the idea of trans-phobia. Transgender activist Nancy Nangeroni told Bay Windows, a local newspaper serving the gay, lesbian and transgendered communities, that activists plan to use the case to call attention to violence against transsexuals and demand an end to discrimination and oppression.

The March /96 newsletter of the Transgenderist's Independence Club coming out of Albany, NY, reported on the recent case of a Ventura, CA, transsexuals arrest, incarceration and subsequent trial after being shot twice (once in the head) by her father. After recovering from her gunshot injuries, Candy Walker was charged in the incident with first degree burglary.

The details of the case include the fact that Ms. Walker had come out to her trans/homophobic parents on Christmas day of 1995, her father responded to the news by calling police to have her physically removed from his home. Three days later, while removing her personal effects from the family home she was discovered by her father who produced a weapon and shot her twice.

The resulting First Degree Burglary charge was justified in a statement by D.A. John Varanelli declaring, "I am concerned about the safety of the community. Candy provoked a violent and most likely justified reaction from her father, whose gunshots caused extreme risk of injury or death to people in the community." In addition, Ms. Walkers cane was later discovered to contain a small blade. Concealed weapons charges were added causing D.A. Varanelli to request and later receive a bail of \$250,000, a figure that would more likely have been given to a plaintiff facing first degree

murder charges. Distressed at the turn of events , her mother offered to take Candy back , drop the charges, and get her into counselling.

With all of the complaints dropped D.A. Varanelli continued to press the weapons charges, causing Ms. Walkers defense attorney to unsuccessfully petition for bail to be set at a more reasonable amount. Later, D.A. Varanelli was overheard, saying to a colleague:"At least that will keep him [sic] off the streets in a dress for a while."

Having undergone psychiatric evaluation and later being released from Vista Del Mar Hospital Candy could still face trial in the matter. Meanwhile, local activists representing the Transgender Menace and TOPS (Transgendered Officers Protect and Serve) have been petitioning both the Judge and D.A. , increasing pressure by promising to organize demonstrations on behalf of Ms. Walker, demanding that the case receive just and prompt resolution.

On the lighter side of the news Enquirer readers across the continent have given a vote of honour to drag queen RuPaul in a recent poll in their Pazzazz on Parade section. The gender bending entertainer extraordinaire took nearly 60 percent more phone in votes than his/her nearest competitors, singer Diana Ross and veejay Rhonda Shear. (Ed. Note: Above information was previously reported by sources which we believe to be reliable.)

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THE GIRLS UP NORTH



Well girls, it's been another whirlwind two months since we last talked. So much has happened, I hardly know where to begin.

Our temporary change/make up area will soon be no more. In its place will be a new & improved make up and change area with washrooms that will leave us with an area almost as large as the one in Calgary. Brett was kind enough to offer her help and build a proper counter for us. The other renovations will probably be finished by the time you read this, allowing us to proceed with our final touches. It has been a long haul getting everything completed at the centre but there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

On the education front, the peer counselling course will be completed by the end of April. Of the twelve people who started the course, only seven are left, including all four girls from Illusions. It has been an excellent course that will not only benefit those who have taken the course, but Illusions in general.

On the political front, the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre Society had its AGM in April. Elected to the board were two members of Illusions, Roxanne and Rachel. Roxanne will be the Social Services Director and yours truly will act as Treasurer. Our participation on the board should ensure that transgendered issues stay in the forefront of the organization. Agreement has already been made to include transgendered people in its Statement of Objectives and Bylaws. These changes should be passed at the next general meeting.

A few of the girls once again attended the symphony at the end of March. Ah, to be dressed in the finest of gowns and listening to Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherazad with two thousand other people. Need I say more.

There has even been an interesting development in the news in April. It seems that a "crossdresser" held up a bank in Edmonton on April 15th. News reports, if you can believe them, described the person as wearing heavy makeup. The person was arrested a couple of days later, thankfully. My sources indicate that she was, a long time ago, actually a member of Illusions.

Some of the girls up north have even made a trip or two to Calgary in April. Roxy and Rachel were down for the Photo Night social. At the social, amongst all the usual chit chat, we got to meet and chat with one of our members all the way from Toronto. While there on Saturday afternoon, we did some shopping and had dinner en femme at a Caribbean restaurant called Island Experience. It's located on 10th Street NW. The food was HOT!, and Mary-Frances, our waitress, treated us great. Also during the weekend, I put up a notice listing all the themes/topics and dates of our socials till the end of September.

To quote a petite porky pink actor, "Well, That's all Folks!"

A group of five girls headed down to Calgary again the following week for the ISCCA Coronation Ball. We arrived on Friday night, changed into our true selves, went out for supper and partied the weekend away. I even have the pictures to prove it. These pictures are even available for destruction, if the price is right! The restaurants we ate at en femme, if any of you girls are interested, were: 4 Brothers and Frantic Circle(a block from Boystown). Some of us even did some shopping in the Kensington area and had a blast trying on clothes with the help of enthusiastic sales clerks. One of our group, Roxanne, was also on stage for a performance with the Edmonton Court at the coronation. Empress Teri, along with three couples from Illusions, also put on a number that wowed the house.

Back to Edmonton and our regular events. In March, for our community awareness social, we had people from the I.S.C.W.R. Court and Northern Chaps come and talk to us about their clubs. Allie and Ozzie, respectively, were terrific and everyone came away knowing a lot more than what they did at the start of the evening. Northern Chaps is a club for people who share an interest in leather. The I.S.C.W.R. Court is the Edmonton equivalent of the I.S.C.C.A. in Calgary, who just had their Coronation Ball as you read earlier.

In April, we had Karin, from Body & Soul come out to give a talk on skin care and related topics. The topics we talked about ranged from waxing the eyebrows to moisturizers and most areas in between. Her shop is located only a couple of blocks north of where we hold our socials. Our second social in April was our Get Acquainted night. This was where everyone got a chance to tell everyone else a bit more detail about themselves and who they were.

After a two year absence from running for empress, this year there are two in the running for the title from Edmonton, Roxanne and your humble servant, me. Roxanne has been working toward the title all year. She has helped increase the awareness of our club in the alternate lifestyle community this past year almost single handedly.

Gossip on the royalty is big news. Let's face it, everyone seems to know Princess Di's every move. If British royalty is big news, Illusions' royalty should be even bigger news (in my humble opinion). Your gossip reporter, Rachel, will get you all the glorious details because she'll be there, in person, behind the scenes. What more could you gossip hungry fans want.

CALGARY'S UPCOMING EVENTS

Many thanks to Alexis and Susan of Photography by Alexis (541-0700) for coming out to do photo shoots for all the aspiring glamour gals, and to P.J. for helping spruce up our hair for the cameras. Twenty-five shoots were done, making the evening a great success. We also owe a tip of our Easter bonnets to Jami of Style Council Salon (264-8994) for an informative presentation on wig styling. Michelle, Christine and Diane all organized socials since the last issue, thereby taking some of the pressure off your worn-out Empress. Thanks, gals!

DR. J.J. MILES, a prominent Calgary expert on transgenderism, will attend our Saturday, May 18 social. Dr. Miles has many years of experience counselling crossdressers, transsexuals and others with cross-gender issues to resolve.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN '96 will be in full swing by the time of our Thursday, May 30 social. Anyone running for Empress VI can take the opportunity to say a few words and do some informal politicking.

Get a sneak preview of our Empress wanna-bes warming up for the big night at a **PRE-BIRTHDAY CANDIDATES' SHOW** organized by Special K at the Midnight Café, Friday, June 14 at 9PM.

OUR SIXTH BIRTHDAY PARTY will be held Saturday, June 15. This is the evening we elect a new Empress to step into Teri's size 14s. Every vote counts (last year's contest was decided by one vote!), so be sure to show up and vote for the candidate of your choice. This is one of the biggest events of the year, so be sure to arrive early--especially if you're a candidate!

The **ARGRA RODEO** will be held from June 28-30 this year. We have booked six camp sites for the Saturday night and hope to have an RV or two at this funfest. Call Teri at 289-4229 if you'd like to reserve one of our spots for your tent or vehicle (\$15). Even if you're not

interested in bronco-busting or steer-ropeing (or whatever it is they do at rodeos), this event is an excuse for a campout and a couple of days of non-stop fun. Please let Teri know if you'd like to help out. ARGRA needs 250 volunteers to run this event; surely we can contribute a couple!

Our annual **STAMPEDE BBQ** will be Saturday, July 13. Be sure to come early for some cheap, delectable grilled treats, with the proceeds going to the Social Committee Fund (you can also bring along your own slab of dead critter if you like).

Our Thursday social on July 25 is still looking for a theme, so if you have an idea, please let someone on the social committee know--or whisper into the new Empress's ear! By the time these events are over, your new Empress will have had a chance to put her own stamp on things and a whole slate of fun stuff, probably including a campout (date to be announced) and the Girls of Summer (August)!

1840

Every good New York drugstore employed a full-time cosmetician—to apply ladies' makeup, one would think. Though these makeup pros did perform such genteel activities as shadowing an eye or fluffing on powder, their real duties were more mundane: most were on call to doctor the black eyes of feisty male patrons.

Thanks...Karen & Gina

For working on the Magazine!

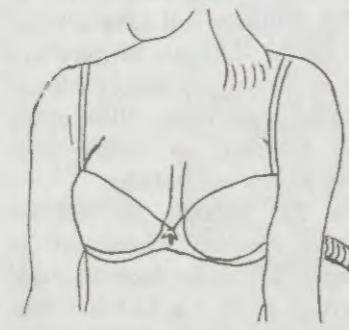
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Your Feminine Side and Your Tarot Reader

A Tarot reader, or any type of metaphysical reader, can either give you insight and enjoyment or leave you feeling empty and searching for more. People go to readers for many reasons - curiosity, spiritual guidance, belief, self help, or just for fun. To receive a reading that suits you, it's important to consider several things before you chose from the large selection of readers available. The most important things to consider are the reader's compatibility with you and reliability.

A reader's reliability depends on the reader's own values, but by using common sense and asking a few questions you can get a pretty good idea. If you want a reader that you can return to and your needs are serious don't pick a reader who is not a permanent part of the community, as it is excellent to build up a rapport with your reader. Find out in advance the cost, the length of time, what the reader is able to do and if the reader tapes the reading (there is a great deal of information given at a reading). If the reader doesn't ask if you can. If the reader refuses, ask why? Don't be afraid to phone and talk to them without committing yourself, or talk to friends who go to readers and get their recommendations.

It's essential you find a reader who is sympathetic and open to you - because this reader will be looking into the privacy of your life. Having spent my life facing my own form of prejudice I learned to demand the rights of acceptance.

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have the "Right" to trust. Just as you have the "Right" to feel equally as comfortable coming to your reader in your best pumps and skirt as you would in your workboots and hardhat.

When you find a reader you can trust and be open with, your reader will speak freely of any feminine nuances in your cards. To ensure you receive the best reading you can, let your reader know what you are seeking - an in depth look at your life, indications of where to go next or perhaps for a special occasion like a small get together for a girl's night out.

Finding a reader for yourself isn't as difficult as it sounds. Don't get discouraged, take your time, smile and enjoy!.... Diane

CHEAPER THAN SURGERY ...if you can wait

Dr. Leonard George of British Columbia writes in his book *Alternative Realities* that some societies believe a rebirth can also mean a gender change. "It is noteworthy that anxiety about interlife sex change partially motivated orthodox Christianity to suppress the reincarnation doctrine. St. Jerome wrote that the worst part was that 'we may have to fear that we who are now men may afterwards be born women'".

(from The Globe and Mail, April 8, 1996, p. A8)



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TRANSVESTISM WITHIN A PARTNERSHIP OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILIES.

BY YVONNE SINCLAIR.

SECOND (REVISED) EDITION..... Continued from March Issue.

transvestites' wives who have come to terms with this emotive period of their relationships. It is through these social contacts that one realizes that many fears and doubts have little or no foundation. Many wives quite easily accept transvestism, as they do not see it as a threat within the confines of their relationship. It is only because we believe in the strength of the male image that we see it as abnormal for a man to dress in female clothes. Women often wear trousers during normal everyday activities, and they do not attach added strength to them in any way.

You may possibly find that talking to

either a marriage guidance counsellor

or the Samaritans will be beneficial;

but as a listening ear only. They have

knowledge of transvestism in the first

place only through

Transvestite/Transsexual Groups and Societies.

11 Is there a cure?

Transvestism has no cure, as it is not an illness. Transvestites deviate from the acceptable behavioral pattern, that is all. Psychiatrists have tried various methods of 'curing' it, from drugs to ECT, aversion therapy, and so on. It was found that none worked. It is a pleasure to the person, and there is no cure for pleasure.

Quite often transvestites will believe that they are mentally ill because they are isolated through their fear of discovery. Too often, this loneliness can cause depression; even those who are not who are not transvestite will understand the need for some form of social friendship; many people find it difficult to make such contacts through shyness. For the transvestite this can be two-fold, as they are also afraid that their "secret" will be discovered.

Though you may feel that your partner should see a psychiatrist, they in turn

can do nothing to stop or prescribe what is no more than the simple act of dressing. The fact that society puts so much store on being masculine causes men to grow into adults wanting to be known as the male; yet deep seated feelings that are as old as time itself causes the transvestite to wish to portray the image of a woman.

Though most transvestites do not want a sex change, the desire has crossed the mind of every one at some stage; the very fact that a man wishes to wear female clothing is a reminder that from the onset of the transvestism, either young or old, they wanted to be seen as female, or wondered what it felt like to wear skirts. The act of doing so, for the transvestite, is the first step in what becomes a lifetime compulsion.

We must bear in mind that there are a thousand reasons why a transvestite dresses in female clothing for the first time, and no two are the same; but there is a pattern which emerges: The second time makes it a habit of a lifetime. Yet, for all the fuss and trauma, the act in itself is nothing more than getting dressed.

12 Will he stop if I refuse his need to dress and threaten divorce?

Anyone who offers a threat as a cure will not find that they or their life will get any better. It will not stop him, and you will find your attitude will not gain his love. This is something which gives him pleasure, and he will not be forced into a rejection of transvestism. Would you accept control over your way of expressing yourself?

When you encounter a fault in your marriage nobody expects that it is going to be easy to solve. Each partner must to some degree appreciate the other's weaknesses, and accept

them to some extent. In this way, the weaknesses become tolerable, and the strengths become a greater bond between two people living together. If you cannot accept his transvestism, then at least let him find a means of expressing it outside the marriage and the home by joining a group which accepts him and offers help through social contact. Perhaps you could arrange to be absent on certain days so that he may dress at home, and maybe have the company of one of his like minded friends.

All transvestites will wish to meet others; mostly to talk and discuss their dressing. This helps to allay fears which they may have built up over the years about their transvestism, and also to find a sympathetic listener who shares their desire to dress in women's clothing. Another major topic is what they feel to be 'woman's talk'; about fashion or make up - what little talk of sex there may be is often to re-affirm their heterosexuality.

In a study of transvestites and their literature, by Dr. Brierley, it was very clearly noted that the greatest reading pleasure of the transvestite lies in the descriptions of putting the clothes on, e.g. "*I drew the dainty satin petticoat over my head and let it slither over my body*". One would normally read, "*I pulled on the slip and then stepped into the skirt*". The words and visual images which evoke the picture of a man dressing in female clothes is the pleasure; transvestism is not a prelude to sexual encounters. It stands alone in the sheer pleasure of wearing the clothes and sharing the experience. The need for sexual contact with either sex is no part of the compulsion.

It should also be borne in mind that quite often the acceptance by both parties of his need to dress will result in the transvestite no longer feeling the sense of urgency to do so. Often, awareness of sharing the secret acts as a control after the first instance of you seeing him dress. You might feel acutely embarrassed at seeing him dressed for the first time; he will feel the same; but after this there can be an element of fun, excitement and

discovery in the knowledge that he is now sharing his transvestism with someone else for the first time. If you feel that permanent separation is the only solution to your predicament, and use transvestism as grounds for the divorce, then it will become public knowledge through reporting in newspapers. This will hurt yourself and others within your family circle.

13 As he is a transvestite, is he homosexual?

No It is through stereotyping the image of homosexuality that it has become linked with effeminacy. Transvestites are generally married and prefer normal co-habitation with a woman. Invariably he is more sympathetic and understanding, and involved with home affairs and the responsibility of children. As his transvestism very probably existed before your relationship or your marriage, when he was a single person, then it is obvious that he has remained heterosexual and carried out the normal courtship of the female.

Your partner has already shown in his love for you that he sees himself as a normal male, and seeks normal sexual intercourse. He is not any less a man through deriving pleasure from transvestism; in fact it is not unusual that through the act of dressing he has built within his sexual nature a stronger need to prove to himself what he already knows he is: a man.

Transvestism is not homosexuality, it is an aberration from the normal mode of dress we associate with sexual identification; of the two different styles of dress which provide the visual images by which the sexes are defined in society. Homosexuality is an act of sex between two persons of the same gender. There are transvestites who are homosexual, just as there are transvestites who are heterosexual.

As heterosexuals are the larger part of what is termed normal society, and your relationship was built on a normal heterosexual courtship, you may safely assume that any homosexual feelings are unlikely.

There are, however, bisexuals; who

can have relationships with both sexes. They can and do use their transvestism as a means of making themselves attractive to the male sex. In such cases it appears that they both enjoy the image role for sexual reasons; the transvestite seeing the role of dressing as a woman and performing what is a homosexual act as a further extension of the female he is playing. Often, the partner in turn will see the act as non homosexual; as the male is playing the female role (through image), the act is not associated as homosexual.

It must be made clear that homosexuality involves an attraction of the same sexual identities, so for the male homosexual masculinity is, to some extent, the same attraction that a woman feels for a man. A man dressed as a female has no has no attraction to the male homosexual; he is normally looking for a male image to which he can relate.

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"HOMOSEXUAL PANIC DEFENCE" A JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENCE.

Two recent murder trials in Greater Vancouver, both of a gay man by a heterosexual man, remind us that there remains a systemic bias against gays and lesbians in the criminal justice system. In both cases, the accused was allowed to raise the "homosexual panic defence," by which a heterosexual man attempts to avoid or reduce his criminal liability for the murder by suggesting that he was the "victim" of an "unwanted homosexual advance." Essentially, this defence allows the accused to argue that his violence was a reaction to an "unwanted homosexual advance" by the victim, triggering a disassociative state for which he should not take full legal responsibility for brutal actions. It is raised to try to reduce first degree murder to either second degree murder or, more usually, manslaughter. It is sometimes articulated as a form of "mental defect" of the accused; or to argue "self defence," or to argue that the accused was "provoked" by the alleged sexual advance. In the last situation, the accused tries to invoke Section 232 of the Criminal Code, which allows a reduction of murder to manslaughter if the accused was "provoked," if, that is, the victim committed "a wrongful act or insult that is of such a nature as to be sufficient to deprive an ordinary person of the power of self control...and the accused acted on it suddenly and before there was time for his passion to cool."

The accused's defence is based on an assumption that extreme violence, including murder, may be an understandable reaction by a self identified heterosexual male to a perceived "homosexual advance." The original theoretical basis in the 1950's for this "defence" was psychiatry's classification of "homosexual panic" as a psychological disorder. It was defined as an uncontrollably violent reaction by a man who had latent homosexual tendencies, triggered by being confronted (allegedly) with a perceived homosexual advance. Because psychiatry labelled

homosexuality as a mental illness in the 50's, it is not surprising that psychiatrists and the courts considered the fear of confronting one's own latent homosexuality to be a psychological disorder, though no one could ever explain how the extreme level of violence was justified.

Regardless, with the accepted psychiatric reality that homosexuality is not a mental illness or disorder and, as "homosexual panic" was removed from the list of recognized psychological disorders in the 1960's, any psychiatric justification for this defence has long been removed.

Further, the accused was initially required to call medical evidence to prove the psychological disorder and relate it to evidence of his own latent homosexuality. But over time, this requirement was ignored and in several cases the accused called evidence to prove he was heterosexual and in other cases called no medical expertise. The accused simply began to argue, without supporting evidence, that a heterosexual man should be expected to react to an advance with extreme violence. The courts have accepted these arguments, even though they are unrelated to the original psychiatric or theoretical justifications for the "defence." This "defence" is only available to heterosexual men. For some reason, it has never been expected that heterosexual women would, or should react similarly if subject to a "lesbian advance." It is also not expected that the "defence" would be used by a heterosexual woman, gay man or lesbian who is the subject of an "unwanted heterosexual advance" from a man. When this "defence" developed, the courts and the psychiatric profession were almost exclusively heterosexual and male.

They also excused other forms of violent behaviour by heterosexual men by allowing the accused to raise a "defence" that the victim was "disreputable" and deserved or provoked the violence. For example, not long ago, the courts allowed the reduction of charges or sentences for

men who killed female prostitutes; they suggested that women who wore revealing clothing were responsible for "provoking" sexual assaults on themselves; and accepted evidence of the victim's past sexual history to see if she might have consented to be raped. While the increased presence of women on the bench has caused the courts to recognize the need to limit or disallow these biased based "defences," the courts have not done so in respect to "homosexual panic defence." Merely raising this "defence" further victimizes the victim; manipulates the homophobia of some judges or jurors; and serves to reinforce and legitimize violence against gays and lesbians by suggesting that violence may be a justifiable response by a heterosexual man to an alleged or perceived "homosexual advance." It is a socially constructed "defence" that justifies violence. Its continued existence demonstrates that gays and lesbians are not yet treated equally under our criminal law.

It is ironic that this defence continues to exist in the year when the federal government has been under attack for including lesbians and gay men in the protection in its hate crimes legislation. It can be eliminated in either of two ways: the federal government can legislate the defence out of existence, and the provincial Crown can challenge an accused's attempted use of the defence on the grounds that it contravenes the equality of rights of gay men. In the wake of the two cases this year, Attorney - General, Ujjal Dosanjh has agreed to a request to investigate within his ministry, the use of this defence in criminal trials. The day is eagerly anticipated when the law does not excuse the murder of gay men, and when heterosexual men learn to say "no thank you" as a less violent alternative to murder.

Reprinted from the "ZENITH DIGEST" Vancouver, B.C., February 1996 Issue

Illusions Gals

The annual ISCCA ball is one of the highlights of the year's social calendar: a once-a-year chance to pull out that over-the-top party gown and see some of the best performers from across Canada and the United States.

For those who missed last issue's interview with HMISM Empress XIX Donna DuYahwanna, ISCCA stands for the Imperial Sovereign Court of the Chinook Arch. It is part of a network of organizations across North America which put on shows and other fundraisers throughout the year to raise money for local charities.

Over twenty Illusions gals showed up for this year's event. While our organizations are entirely separate (the ISCCA is mostly made up of drag performers), and have separate Empresses (they have an Emperor, too) we have a long history of mutual support. Throughout the year, many of us came to know and love Empress Donna, the Perogic Baba, and Emperor Billy. This year, for the first time, our support of the ISCCA was recognized in two ways.

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Make a Splash

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First, we received a Command to perform, an honour usually reserved for performers of much greater experience. Empress Teri led a troupe consisting of Princess Michelle and Brenda, Princess Jacqui and Leslie, and Lady-in-Waiting Christine and Belle in a rousing rendition of "Let the Good Times Roll" that almost brought the house down (the ceiling was so low Teri hit the chandeliers several times with overly flamboyant gestures!!).

Second, the ISCCA allowed us to designate a beneficiary for a \$500 contribution to be made in our name. We designated the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, which will receive a \$500 Walmart gift certificate for the purchase of towels, disposable diapers, and other needed items.

Princesses Michelle and Jacqui also did backup for Empress candidate Allison, while Marsha and Roxy from Edmonton were part of the Edmonton Court's Teutonic performance.

The Ball is also where the results of the election for the next ISCCA Emperor and Empress are announced. These are kept secret until the very end. After a heavy turnout of over 300 voters the previous week (anyone in southern Alberta can cast a ballot), this year's contest was expected to be a tight race between Allison and Neil for Emperor XX and Betty Crocker, Melanie, Ms. Rhonda Carousel and Mz. Toni for Empress XX. The results bore this out, as just 15 votes separated the top three finishers for Empress and just 20 votes separated the two Emperor candidates.

The climax of the evening was the coronation of the winners, who became Empress XX Ms. Rhonda and Emperor XX Neil. They took the titles of Jade Crystal Emperor of Fun and Frivolity and the Rainbow Empress Lady of Colour. Their house will be known as the Double Decade House of Colours, Crystals and Cowpokes.

If this issue reaches you by May 12, be sure to attend the ISCCA Investitures at Moneypenny's (formerly the Boxxe, 111 15th Ave SW) at 5PM sharp. If not, watch for other ISCCA events throughout the year, and book April 19, 1997 for next year's ball, whose theme will be "Over the Rainbow: If Hogs Could Fly".

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FEMININITY: A DOUBLE EDGE SWORD.

BY KAREN

As a crossdresser, in day to day travels around town it is an interesting exercise to just observe women in general. One can sharpen ones own image by paying close attention to what women are wearing in the way of fashions, styles and make up, etc. Try to pick out one, or more really striking features in a well dressed woman. Use these observations to better your own portrayal of femininity. Calgary's public transit system is an ideal setting for your observations, particularly the L.R.T. as there is such a wide variety in ridership. The genetic female in today's "liberated age" can range from trendy to trashy, conservative to casual, and just about anywhere in between.

Since we are not female, we cannot begin to understand how they feel as regards fashion, a business which has for far too been long dominated by male designers. To their credit, they are now wearing what they feel comfortable in. No longer are women willing to be dictated to in terms of this fashion or that, merely because this year's hem lines are either up or down. Congratulations ladies for making your own "statement," you are already paying through the roof prices, why should you be told when and what to buy.

A more pressing concern; is the sloppy, careless, couldn't give a fiddler's *#@^#+?~ if I look presentable or not sort of woman. Believe me there are more of them around than you realize, travel by bus and "C-Train" on a daily basis and you will see what I mean. There are occasions which are far too numerous to list here, when I have seen these types of appearances all too frequently. Here are the categories, you may have seen them for yourself, for the most part a little care and attention would work wonders.

THE FULL FIGURE: This is the mostmisquoted term in describing size and shape, as it covers everything

from slightly over plump to gross obesity. The ones that come quickly to mind are the really large ones, the "fat and flaunt it types" who are convinced that they look great in miniskirts or shorts. An Uncle of mine visiting from Scotland some years back, put it in a nutshell, "She shouldnae be wearin' shorts, jist lookit her by Christ, her arse looks like twa fitba's in a sweatrag." (two soccer balls that is.) Crude, blunt, undiplomatic maybe, but it summed it up perfectly. I have seen a great many large ladies very tastefully dressed, so it is possible to look good at this size.

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to privacy considerations.

THE NATURAL LOOK: I can understand not wanting to fuss with hair or make up, but once again I am at a loss to understand the fear of water, shampoo or soap. Surely personal pride and self esteem are at least worth half an hour once, maybe twice a day. Believe me there are women out there who fit this category. About a year ago, I was on a shopping excursion to South Centre, and travelling on a southbound "C-Train" when I overheard a conversation between two such women. Each were expressing derogatory opinions about a mutual friend, whom it appears they had discovered was a crossdresser, as one girl exclaimed, "Don't you just despise guys who look better in a dress than you do!" They were not aware that one seat behind them sat a crossdresser, since my back was to them they did not even look in my direction. In essence girls, it isn't just the dress, it is the personal hygiene and grooming, care of ones body, hair and skin before the make up goes on. You could learn something here, if you really wanted to that is.

So there it is, whether or not it is women's liberationists, or radical feminists, neither is an excuse for being slovenly, unkempt or just plain dirty. Don't get me wrong, I know there are guys out there that are every bit as sloppy and untidy, they are equally as inexcusable. If in our attempt as crossdressers we put ourselves out to look our absolute best, and we act according to the gender we are portraying, then the onus is on many of the natural born women to smarten up their appearances. Come on ladies - The ball is in your court. And finally a word to our members of "ILLUSIONS" To wear womens clothes is not the be all and end all, the secret is learning to exude the grace and charm, to display the mannerisms and characteristics of a woman, when portraying femininity.

THRONE SPEECH

From Illusions Empress V, Teri

It's hard to believe that this is my last throne speech. It seems like only yesterday I was sitting dumbfounded on the stage having a crown plopped on my head. So much has happened since then.

Fortunately, a lot of what has happened has been positive. Membership, attendance and the Social Committee fund are all up, and we seem to have a higher profile than ever.

What many members may not realize is that our club is much like a duck on the water: things seem to be gliding along smoothly, but only thanks to a lot of frantic activity beneath the surface. As Empress, I have sometimes been given much of the credit for what has happened, but actually it has been due to a lot of work by a lot of people who seldom get the recognition they deserve.

I was very fortunate to have the support of a very active social committee Michelle, Jacqui, Diane and Christine each took primary responsibility for various events throughout the year. You probably have seen their contribution, even if you didn't know just how much work went on behind the scenes. What you may not be aware of is the countless hours Gina and Karen (Special K) have put in around the club. This magazine wouldn't be in your hands right now without Empress IV Lisa's editorial skills. And of course we wouldn't have a place to meet without the administrative support of Barbie and Christine (as most of you know, without them and Maggie, I wouldn't have the closet full of clothes I've accumulated, either!)

I was also fortunate to have the help of many friends outside the club who responded to my calls for help, like Jami from Style Council, Lynn and Melanie from Davlin Enterprises, Alexis from Photography by Alexis and our "Hostess with the Mostest", Debbie at the Midnight Café.

Last, but far from least, I owe a great debt to the one and only Ty Morgan, who has helped us all out with advice, Ultima II/Revlon product donations, and the many connections he's developed over the years.

I'd like to end this column with two appeals to all club members.

First, sometime during the year, make it a point to volunteer to spend a couple of hours and/or a couple of bucks helping the club. Drop in sometime and vacuum, donate a couple of boxes of Kleenex (always in short supply), or stick around to help clean up for a few minutes at the end of a social. If everyone would do just two hours of work each during the year, it would make the reign of your next royalty a great deal easier.

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Second, be tolerant of others. Look for areas of agreement and build on them, rather than drawing lines in the sand over differences. Badmouthing people is no way to bring them over to your side; it only makes them dig in. Many groups are destroyed by people speculating about the motives of others and assuming the worst, or carrying the baggage of history far too long. Let's never let that happen to Illusions.

This has been a great, if hectic, year, and one of the highlights of my life. In many ways, if you've read this column regularly, you now know my innermost feelings better than anyone. Now I hope to have more time to chat and get to know all the new members even better. Finally, be sure to get out and vote at the Birthday Party for the gal that you think will work the hardest for you over the next year, will best represent the club to outside groups, and will do the most to keep us all one big happy family!

QUESTIONS FOR NON-CROSSDRESSERS (based on a similar questionnaire by Martin Rochlin, Ph.D.)

The next time someone questions you about your crossdressing, here are a few snappy rejoinders that may make them (and you!) think again...

1. What do you think caused your obsession with male clothing?
2. When and how did you first decide to wear male clothing exclusively?
3. Is it possible this obsession with male clothing is a phase you will grow out of?
4. Is it possible your obsession with male clothing stems from neurotic fears of female attire?
5. If you've never worn women's clothing, is it possible that all you need is a good dress to change your mind?

A PRINCESS'S SWAN SONG

Well Girrls, the year sure went by fast! Being first Princess has been an awful lot of fun and some hard work too. In my view, Empress V Teri, has set a new standard for both the new Empress VI and her Princesses that will be a hard act to follow. Actually, Dixie from Edmonton told me that whoever followed Teri would have a hard time filling her heels, and I would have to agree totally! The evolution of the Illusions Empress position toward one of club leadership was started by Princess III Lisa, who, by an unfortunate set of circumstances, became Empress III six months into the term of Empress III Wendy, who abdicated her position for reasons of her own. Empress III Lisa then went on to be elected Empress IV in the next year's pageant. During Lisa's reign, the Illusions social committee was established and the club's membership saw a marked increase. Teri picked up where Lisa's efforts left off, expanded on them and added an agenda of her own. I expect that Empress VI will have to be prepared to do the same.

Teri and I had similar platforms or goals for Illusions during our run for Empress last year. Among other things, we both wanted to expand the horizons of the club by providing new opportunities for adventure out in the community and we both wanted to pay more attention to the needs of new members. Teri as Empress V with her enthusiastic devotion to leadership of the Illusions Social Committee, did a serious amount of outreach towards the various factions of the alternative community that has brought both new opportunities and understanding to each of us as club members. For my part, I decided to concentrate on having the theme of my reign as 1st Princess revolve around the concerns of new members, and especially to those who were reading about us in the Illusions magazine, but were still locked away in the closet by themselves. For the most part, and to the best of my ability I used my

Princess column for this purpose. So, in my columns I wrote about issues involving the inner self and the need for self acceptance of your crossdressing. I consider both of these items to be important components of the coming out experience. From time to time I also wrote about things we were doing around the club, just to show what kind of fun you could have after you came out. One of the great joys I have had throughout this past year was to see some positive results from my efforts. A number of new Illusions members contacted me and made me a part of their coming out experience. It was nice to be able to lend a helping hand and share my new found knowledge with them. Awe, heck, it was just plain nice to be asked in the first place! I also tried to be a good hostess (in and around my other Princess duties) and make myself available and spend time chatting with new members at Illusions socials.

All told it made for a busy year and one that isn't quite over yet. First, there was organising for our attendance at the ARGRA Rodeo. Then came organising the Girls of Summer Pageant and an on going series of Social Committee events, which have become such an important part of our clubs activities. Added to that have been things related to our reach in the local community and support for Illusions events in Red Deer and Edmonton. Another area that receives constant support from me is keeping in touch (by letter mostly) with many of our members who live out of town. I have many penpals as a result and it is fun writing to them and keep them up to date on a personal basis. You know it is very hard for an Illusions member who lives a long ways away to keep reading about all the great things we are doing and not be able to participate, so I try to keep them feeling involved by writing to them and keeping them informed on a first hand basis. If it sounds like I'm singing the "Work House Blues", forget it, I'm not! Having the

opportunity to transform into Michelle Hart and having the chance to be a Grrl with a purpose is an even better one!

So Adieu, goodbye.... Thanks Christine and Barbie for creating Illusions, the place where I finally had a chance to come to terms with myself. Thanks, Lisa Empress IV, for being patient with me and helping me along. Thanks Teri, for allowing me to contribute during your reign and yet be myself. Thanks to Princess Jacqui and Ladies in Waiting; Gina, Karen, Christine and Dana who supported me in my endeavors throughout this past year when ever I asked them to. A special Thanks to those who encouraged me when I felt a bit down or counselled me when I was upset! We all have those moments, but it's wonderful to have friends that are willing to help you get beyond it

Don't you just hate it, when the Academy Awards people start thanking everything in site. Guess what? If you are truly thankful it's hard not to do. If I look back over the last few years since Michelle has come out, I think if asked what my outstanding achievement was for myself was learning how to say Thank-you and mean it! What more can I say, except one more Thank-you and that is to my wife Brenda, who is a very special person in my life Thank-you Brenda, for allowing me to become myself and supporting me while I do it! Amongst many friends, Brenda is my "Best Friend".

A short year, a long story..... heck, that's nothing new for Michelle who qualifies every story by saying, "Well, not to make a long story, But!" So now, as an Arab who is about to strike her tent and steal away into the night, I can only say where I am pitching my next camp..... and that is..... you guessed it, Michelle is running for Empress VI. Vote for Michelle, despite her odd quirks, she's a real good kid!

Love and Best Wishes... & Loving it!
Michelle Hart, 1st Princess V

Observations of the 2 nd. Princess, Jacqui

It is with a heavy heart that I write this, my last, "Princess Column" for Illusions. I have said before and can't reiterate enough, that holding the title of 2 nd. Princess V has been a tremendous honour for me. I have enjoyed every minute of representing our club at outside events. I hope that my efforts within the club have met with the approval of you, the club members, who elected me to this position.

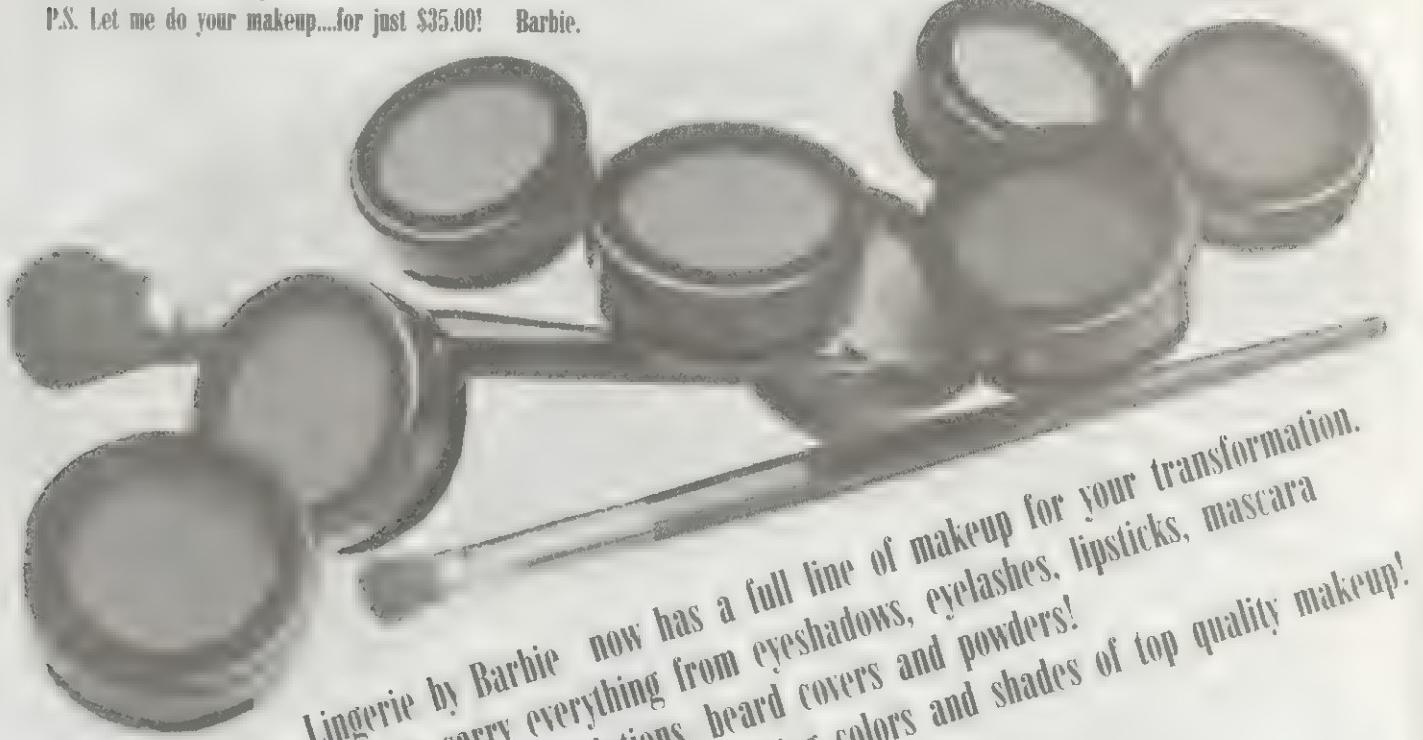
I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful work that our Empress V, Teri, has done in her year at the helm of our club. Never before has Illusions been so prominent in Calgary. Her tireless work has seen the Illusions Social Club rise in prominence with the I.S.C.C.A., so much so that the I.S.C.C.A. donated \$500.00 in our name to a charity of our choice. We were prominent at the A.R.G.R.A. rodeo in July, and again at the I.S.C.W.R. Ball in Edmonton in August. Local night clubs such as the Midnight Cafe, Detours, Trax and the Boxxe Cafe, not only welcomed us but in many cases requested our presence. Through Teri's efforts we were featured on the C.B.C. television show "Rough Cutz" and on the C.B.C. radio

morning show the "Calgary Eyeopener". Behind the scenes she provided guidance and leadership for the social committee that ensured that the membership was always entertained at our club. The position of Empress will never be the same. To you, Your Highness Empress V, Teri, I say thank you.

In previous articles this year, I have mentioned my dear friend, 1 st. Princess V, Michelle. Like Empress Teri, Princess Michelle has put countless hours on Illusions' behalf. I sometimes wonder if people realize the dedication it takes to put in the effort that Michelle puts in when you live 130 kilometres away from our city. Thank you Princess Michelle. I wish you success in all your endeavors

To the Ladies in Waiting, Gina, Christine, Karen and Dana Thank you also for your hard work on the social committee. Your collective efforts helped make Illusions Social Club a fun place to come to. I am honoured to have served with you. Thank you to all the members and supporters of Illusions for allowing me to serve as your 2 nd. Princess V this past year..... Jacqui

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LETTERS

Dear Barbie and Christine,

Thank you so very much for your very welcome letter, and the copy of the "ILLUSIONS" magazine. I really enjoyed all the articles very much, I found them to be very informative and it is good to see you have so many members who contribute to the magazine sharing their experience and knowledge.

I plan on joining the ladies as a member, but it will have to be at a later date. I do have a suggestion you might want to consider; Have you ever considered setting up a 1 - 800, or a 1 - 900 line, with a voice mailbox system so their could be a network of crossdressers people could talk to. I know being from this end of the country, and a small town environment, I would like to be able to take advantage of this type of service. It would be great to be able to talk to someone who has been there, and can pass on advice in order to help others out of the closet.

I guess there are sisters here but as yet I haven't been able to find any of them. One more reason for me to join ILLUSIONS, I wish I had known about your club when I lived in Edmonton, it is great to know you are there now.

Your Friend, Tamie.

Dear Illusions,

I'm interested in a years subscription to your magazine. I'll be sure to expose it to my many friends in our group here in Toronto.

I'm a TS, struggling with my employer (a national courier company), getting through the "getting through" part. I've tried to transition on the job quietly, but didn't want the harassment to continue; my offer was to a lower paying, non-union job in a hostile environment. Enter the "Human Rights Commission"..... Trying to be subtle but assertive is complicated.

I've enclosed my article which was printed (after my first letter was) in the Toronto Star April 25, 1995 and my letter on April 2, 1995. (ED. Note.. Excerpts from both in magazine.)

I'm interested also in writing a number of times to someone, develop a friendship, and maybe even can drive there in August

Let's get to know each other, Dawna

Dear Barbie and Christine,

Thank-you for all your efforts with Illusions Club. Your time spent on the many things that are necessary to keep such a club functioning are appreciated by everyone of us. Especially those of us that are at a distance and can not contribute as much as we'd like. I wish I could contribute

more to the club and newsletter. I will be doing so any chance I get, and perhaps in some way help to lessen the load for others.

I would like to ask if you could send me a list of the books and videos that are available for members to view, also how to arrange for their use. Does being out of the province pose a problem?

I've enclosed an extra \$10.00 beyond my membership fees. Thank-you and keep up the good work, I will stop in and say Hi the next time I'm in Calgary. Unfortunately it is not that often.

Yours truly, Beverly #360

(ED. Note.... Beverly, Thank-you for the donation which will be used in some way around the Club. As for your question re: the library, Yes you could borrow material from the library at a rental fee of \$2.00/ item, unfortunately our library is quite large and as yet we haven't been able to get a comprehensive list put together. My suggestion is to call us or ask for a specific title or topic in a letter to us. I hope this helps.)

Dear Barbie, Christine, and Lisa,

Hi, I will first introduce myself. My name is Roxy, 38, married TV with a 1 yr. old son. I purchased my first Illusion magazine in Feb / 96. I have purchased othe TV/TS magazines before and have been disappointed, but I was impressed with your magazine. I immediately sent off my membership and a letter to a Vancouver member. I received my membership card and my new edition in less than a week!

It makes me feel good when I read Illusions, knowing I'm not the only one, and I an also read words of wisdom. Now on with my story:

I have been married for 6 years and have kept my secret until just recently. I wanted to tell my wife about my desires but couldn't. Consequently our relationship was becoming distant.

After reading the article "Transvestism within a Partnership of Marraige and Families" I thought, I have to let the wife read this, but how would I do this?

The following morning I photocopied the article and began planning my approach. Much to my surprise the wife was also planning a confrontation. That afternoon it happened, I still couldn't face to face tell her, the words just lodged in my throat. The imprisoned woman on the inside wanted to speak, be released, the guilty, confused man on the outside could not talk! After an emotional half hour I handed her the article and left for about an hour. Upon my return, I was greeted with a smile and after a long talk she understood. It was so easy and I took so long to do it.

Now our relationship is on track and I spend more time at home. The big winner is our son, who will enjoy the harmonious relationship between his mom & dad.

Roxy - Kelowna #417

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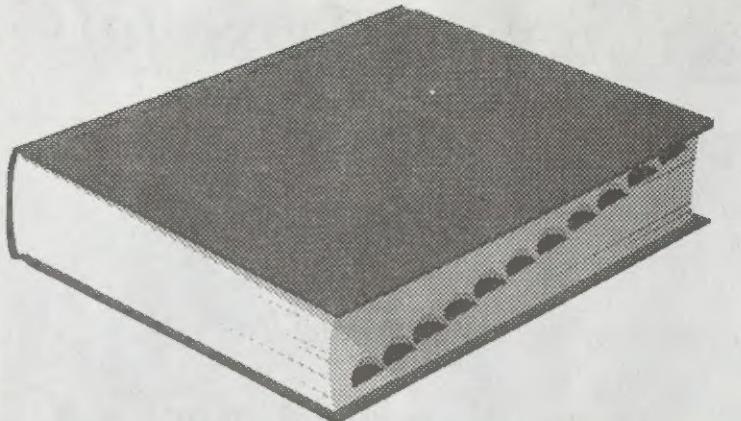
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